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ABSTRACT

Since regular teachers miss on average 8 days of work each year due to illness, there is a need to have well trained substitute teachers for the public schools. The substitute teacher needs inservice education programs which prepare him/her to do a quality job of teaching students. The following are essential reading skills to develop within certified substitute teachers: word recognition skills; structural analysis skills; syntactical analysis skills; and higher levels of cognition in questioning. This paper also considers some other goals which a substitute teacher should aim for, such as helping develop a love for reading in students; having structural ideas in mind as to what needs to be emphasized in reading instruction; possessing a repertoire of skills for students to use in increasing comprehension abilities; being well versed in management strategies when teaching students; having a repertoire of planned activities to assist students to indicate what has been learned within diverse culminating activities; and having knowledge of and implementing evaluation techniques which are valid and reliable for assessing reading achievement. (Contains 10 references.) (NKA)

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The Substitute Teacher in Reading Instruction.

by Marlow Ediger

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THE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER IN READING INSTRUCTION

Substitute teachers have a very important role to play in teaching reading. They are needed to fill vacancies when the regular, certified teacher is unable to be in school due to illness. Approximately eight school days on the average are missed by teachers each year due to illness. There is a need then to have well trained substitute teachers for the public schools. It is necessary for the regular teacher to leave a listing of what has been covered in class previously and what the objectives are for the substitute teacher to pursue. This is good, but not adequate. The substitute teacher needs inservice education programs which prepare him/her to do a quality job of teaching pupils. They are not merely baby sitters, but actually do teach pupils to make as much progress as possible (See Ediger, 2001, 129- 134).

Inservice Education for Substitute Teachers

Having been a university teacher educator for over thirty years, it seems as if there never is enough time to do a good job of preparing teachers for the public schools. Thus, a four or five year teacher education program appears short in duration to educate future teachers in what is necessary to function well in teaching pupils. For the substitute teacher, the duration of time is very short for inservice education in developing high quality instruction. The following are essential reading skills to develop within certified substitute teachers:

1. word recognition skills such as phonetic analysis, syllabication, and contextual clues, to assist pupils to unlock unknown words.
2. structural analysis to help pupils understand word order in reading sentences.
3. syntactical analysis to guide pupils to understand meanings of sentences in reading discourse.
4. comprehension of ideas be it narrative, expository, or creative content.
5. higher levels of cognition in questioning including those stressing creative and critical thinking, as well as problem solving (Ediger, 2001, 183- 187).

Developing a Love for Reading

One of the most salient objectives for pupils to achieve is to love learning and to make it a life long venture. The substitute teacher needs to understand and implement strategies whereby

the affective dimension in reading is implemented and in evidence among pupils. Affective objectives, emphasizing a love for reading, may be emphasized with basal reader use. For any reading selection to be read, background information needs to be developed within pupils. Illustrations in the basal, directly related to the selection to be read, may be used here. The teacher needs to encourage pupils to ask questions pertaining to these illustrations. The resulting questions should be listed on the chalkboard and may be used to establish pupil purpose for reading. The questions come from pupil's interests and should then be used to gather necessary information from reading. Following the reading activity, answers to the previously identified questions may be brainstormed. Brain storming does aid in achieving higher levels of thinking. Both creative (developing additional possible answers) and critical thought (not duplicating on what has been listed) are then being stressed in reading comprehension. In an atmosphere of respect, brain storming can be challenging and enjoyable.

To achieve good attitudes toward phonics in reading, pupils may give words which begin with the same initial consonant, end with the same consonant, or rhyme with a word in the reading selection. Words may also be found having the same vowel sound, regardless of spelling, from the content read. Thus, a word search game may be used here.

To make use, developmentally, of what has been read from the basal, pupils may choose from the following, among other ways:

1. drawing sequential pictures covering content read.
2. writing one or more poems.
3. making a model.
4. developing a different beginning or ending to the story read.
5. redoing the characterization, the setting, or the plot.
6. dramatizing what has been read such as in pantomime, in formal dramatizations, or in creative dramatics. Collaboration among learners is necessary here.
7. arranging and doing a reader's theater within a committee of pupils.
8. writing a set of test questions pertaining to what was read.
9. reading additional stories written by the author(s) or on the same/similar topic read from the basal.
10. keeping a journal on what was experienced from basal reading (See Parker, 2001).

Developing a love for reading is a key component of the curriculum. Hopefully, the love of reading will be a life long adventure for the learner. The substitute teacher needs to be aware of multiple strategies for reading instruction which assist pupils to enjoy and participate actively in the reading curriculum.

In addition to the basal, the substitute teacher may also stress individualized reading in the classroom. Individualized reading emphasizes pupils individually choosing sequential library books to read. Generally, library books are chosen on the basis of being interesting. The reader completes reading the entire book and then has a conference with the teacher. In the conference, the pupil with substitute teacher guidance discusses the contents read. The pupil also reveals skills by reading aloud a particular selection from the chosen library book. The teacher records pupil achievement during/after the conference. Individualized reading may be used along with the basal approach. There is no manual to accompany individualized reading whereas the basal does have a manual to provide suggestions for teaching. These suggestions need to be used creatively to provide a curriculum of excellence in reading.

If time is too short for a conference in individualized reading, sustained silent reading (SSR) may be used. SSR emphasizes pupils choosing a library book to read, as does individualized reading, but without a followup conference. With SSR, all in a classroom, or even in a school building including custodians and cafeteria workers, read at a designated time. Here, pupils may see models of people reading to themselves. It might well be impossible for all of these individuals to read at one time, but in a single classroom, pupils and the teacher may engage in SSR. The substitute teacher then serves as a role model for children. Reading for enjoyment and pleasure is a key goal for pupils to achieve in affective objectives in reading instruction (Ediger, 2002, 16- 19).

Word Recognition Techniques and the Substitute Teacher

There are a plethora of word recognition techniques which may be used by teachers in reading instruction. Substitute teachers need to have structural ideas in mind as to what needs to be emphasized in reading instruction. Gunning (2000) wrote the following:

1. the ultimate goal of phonics is to enable students to become independent readers. Functional practice and extensive reading are recommended to help them reach the goal.
2. words can be read in a number of ways: predicting,

decoding, analogizing, or retrieving sight words. How a word is read depends, in part, on the stage that a reader is in ..... Instruction should be geared to student's stage.

3. the two main approaches to teaching phonics are analytic (whole word) and synthetic (sound by sound)...

4. consonants are generally taught before vowels because their sounds have fewer spellings and because they are more useful in helping students sound out unfamiliar words.

5. consonant elements to be taught include single consonants, digraphs, and clusters. Vowel elements include short- and long- vowel correspondences, other vowels, r vowels, and schwa. Phonics generalizations have limited usefulness.

6. along with phonics, students should use semantic and syntactic clues and their general knowledge to decode words. Along with context clues, students should be taught how to use two powerful word identification strategies: pronounceable word parts and analogy.

7. as children invent spellings, they make important discoveries about their language's writing system. Invented spellings can also give the teacher insight into a child's grasp of the writing system.

8. sight words are frequently appearing words that cannot be easily sounded out or that require advanced decoding skills. They are learned through memorization and frequent use and are expected to be recognized instantly. If possible, phonics should be used to supply additional memory pegs for storing and retrieving sight words.

9. in syllabication, words are broken into parts primarily based on sound patterns. Syllabication may be taught through generalizations or patterns or some combination of the two.

Each substitute teacher needs to experience inservice education pertaining to the above generalizations to be emphasized in the teaching of reading.

Comprehension Skills to be Emphasized

The reading teacher needs to possess a repertoire of skills for pupils to use in increasing compression abilities. Comprehension skills for substitute teachers to implement in the reading curriculum are the following:

1. reading for facts. There are vital facts which need to be sorted out from those of lesser values.

2. reading to follow directions. Pupils need to read and

follow directions to do a task correctly. Not being able to follow directions correctly makes for wasted time in attempting to pursue a task.

3. reading to obtain relevant concepts. Concepts are made up of facts and provide valuable information in dealing with the mass maze of available knowledge. Knowledge becomes increasingly valuable as it becomes an inherent part of a concept. Concepts are single words or phrases which provide categories for acquired information.

4. reading to secure main ideas. Main ideas consist of concepts. Related concepts in sentence form make for a main idea.

5. reading to apply or use information. Main ideas become functional as they can be applied in a new situation. The level of application is practical in that ideas can be useful and utilitarian.

6. reading to analyze. When information is analyzed, it is separated into component parts. The practical from the non-practical, the relevant from the irrelevant, the salient from the non-salient, as well as the important from the unimportant, in terms of subject matter read need to be analyzed.

7. reading to assess information. Here, the pupil judges the wroth or value of what has been read. The reader, too, needs to detect bias, bandwagon approaches, and "popularity" contests.

8. reading for recreational purposes. Here, the pupil should select reading materials for relaxation and sheer enjoyment. Reading can, indeed, be a highly pleasurable experience.

9. reading to extend information. Reading to accrue ideas and knowledge for its very own sake can be highly valuable to the involved individual. Thus, reading to attain general education and be a more highly informed person in and of itself has intrinsic values.

10. reading for utilitarian purposes is a practical kind of reading which assists the individual to achieve more optimally in the vocational and avocational arenas (Ediger, 1998, 74- 77).

The substitute teacher when growing and developing as a professional incorporates the above named objectives to guide optimal pupil comprehension in reading. Achieving professionally is ongoing and continuous. It is never completed, but there is more to learn as knowledge/skills presently are in evidence as well as trends in reading instruction change. From where the substitute teacher is presently in attainment to something that represents a more ideal situation is what needs to be achieved.

Managing Reading Instruction

The substitute teacher needs to be well versed in management strategies when teaching pupils. First, large group instruction may be used when background information is being provided to pupils for reading a given selection. Audio visual aids and discussions need to be used to assist pupils to activate and obtain subject matter directly related to what will be read. Pupils also need to lean upon their own individual experiences to achieve this needed information. It is good, too, to have pupils raise questions for the ensuing reading activity. The questions may be recorded on the chalkboard for pupils to notice to secure answers as the reading experience progresses. By obtaining new content, discussing ideas presented for clarification purposes, and relating personal experiences to the background information en toto, in large group instruction, pupils individually should be ready to read the ongoing lesson to obtain necessary information (See, for example, Bruner, 1986).

Second, small groups may then be formed, after the actual reading of the selection has commenced. Within small groups, pupils may discuss ideas read. Meaning needs to be established for that which lacks understanding by learners within the committee setting. Culminating activities need to be discussed so that pupils individually or in a collaborative endeavor may reveal what has been learned. The culminating experience may cover one lesson or a larger segment of reading instruction. The summarizing activities might well include the following:

a) developing a chart indicating main ideas gleaned from reading.

b) making a collage, mural, or frieze containing illustrations of ideas read.

c) drawings, using diverse media, might reveal learnings obtained. The media may include colored pencils and/or chalk, water color, and magic markers, among others.

d) construction experiences to indicate major concepts or generalizations achieved through reading. Models, realia, and creative work may be made by pupils using wood and cardboard, among other materials.

e) doing a pantomime, creative dramatics, formal dramatization, or role play (See also Clay, 1982).

Creativity is important when small groups have purposes, plan to achieve these purposes or reasons, carry out each purpose, and then assess each in terms of quality standards.

Third, individual endeavors also should be in the offing. These might well include the following:

a) reading a library book by the same author or a book covering similar content.

b) developing an experience chart expressing creative ideas pertaining to subject matter contained in the completed reading lesson.

c) writing diary entries, doing journal writing, developing logs, among other written experiences, might well assist the learner to focus upon salient ideas gleaned from reading.

d) completing an art project encompassing main ideas read.

e) a creative self chosen method of showing pupil achievement, growth, and development. This might include peer teaching and assistance, dyads working together on a reading task, as well as intergrade grouping in cooperation with another teacher (Devine, 1986).

The substitute teacher then needs to have a repertoire of planned activities to assist pupils to indicate what has been learned within diverse culminating activities.

Assessing Pupil Reading Achievement

The substitute teacher needs to have quality knowledge of and implement evaluation techniques which are valid and reliable. Thus, to ascertain what pupils have learned, the substitute teacher may use the following approaches of assessment:

a) teacher observation based on updated criteria.

b) teacher written test items.

c) teacher supervised portfolios developed by individual pupils.

d) teacher developed/used checklists and rating scales of pupil achievement.

e) teacher written anecdotal statements, diary entries, logs, and journal writing, pertaining to episodes/instances of pupil achievement.

f) teacher application of multiple intelligences theory to assist in assessing pupil achievement (See Gardner, 1993).

Assessment procedures need to be based on the objectives of instruction. A variety of procedures need to be used to ascertain pupil achievement and progress. The substitute teacher needs to lean upon the self and trust his/her

thinking to come up with innovative procedures of teaching reading to pupils.

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